

Working in the Fox lab

My purpose here is to set down in writing a few general points. Most of them are probably unnecessary for you.

Some comments on equipment

The main point is something like what we all heard from our parents: “equipment doesn’t grow on trees.” For the most part, equipment only comes from grants, which are difficult to obtain. The equipment “belongs to USF” but that doesn’t mean USF will repair or replace it – it won’t. So it’s important to keep equipment clean and in good repair. The other reason this is important is that someone else will need to use the equipment.

Computers

CAS Computing is responsible for maintaining all the Windows machines; I can fix some things on these machines, but since I’m not actually trained as a technician, I’ll ask you to report anything except simple problems to CAS Computing.

Data

We don’t want to waste effort, so follow a simple guideline: enter data on lab computers as soon as you can after recording them! Most ecologists (including me) can tell stories about how (1) they were sure they remembered the important points about the data, but when they *finally* got to type them into the computer, discovered that they weren’t sure what some things on the data sheet meant, and (2) they were confident that they wouldn’t lose the data, but . . . We don’t need to add more stories to this already-rich folklore – just enter your data right away!

Keys and locks

Everyone who needs access to the lab will have it, but please be sure to lock doors when you leave! And when you graduate or leave the lab, return your keys.

For those registered in BSC 4910 or similar courses

- 1) You are welcome to attend our weekly lab meetings. If you think you may want to go on and become a scientist, or if you want to maximize what you can learn, I strongly encourage it.
- 2) At the end of the semester you will submit a written report on your work.
- 3) There is a page on the lab wiki (for which you will be given a password) for you to log your work hours, and another place for you to log what you’ve done. Think of this log as your lab notebook, and keep entries in it as you would for a paper notebook.
- 4) In most cases, you’ll be working in a team with others. They depend on you – if you promise to work at a particular time, be there.
- 5) You and I will put in writing anything else that we need to about what you’re going to do and what’s expected – that way it won’t be ambiguous. If you’re still not sure, ask.